AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) In a wireless communication system, a method of initiating delivery of an instant voice message to a recipient wireless station, comprising:

receiving a message for a recipient from a sender device at a message server without the sender device placing a call to the recipient, the sender device associated with a messaging service that includes the message server and an interactive voce response (IVR) system, the message including voice content and other multimedia content and designating a recipient;

extracting the voice content from the message at the message server;

storing the voice content in the IVR ~~an interactive voice response (IVR)~~ system;

initiating transmission of a Short Message Service (SMS) notification to the recipient wireless station, the SMS notification including information permitting the recipient wireless station to access the IVR system; and

in response to the IVR system receiving a request for the stored voice content, transmitting the stored voice content from the IVR system to the recipient wireless station.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the recipient wireless device does not have the capability of processing the other multimedia content.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein ~~parsing~~ extracting the voice content from the message is performed in response to a determination that the recipient wireless device does not have the capability of processing the other multimedia content.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the message received from the sender device comprises a Multimedia Messaging Service message.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the recipient is associated with a wireless operator different from a wireless operator associated with the sender.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

obtaining a reply message created by the recipient; and

delivering the reply message to the sender.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein obtaining a reply message comprises recording the reply message at the IVR system in which the voice content ~~parsed~~ extracted from the reply message is stored.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein delivering the reply message to the sender comprises:

storing the reply message in an IVR system; and

initiating transmission of an SMS notification to the sender device, the SMS notification including information permitting the sender device to access the IVR system in which the reply message is stored; and

in response to the IVR system in which the reply message is stored receiving a request for the reply message, transmitting the stored reply message to the sender device.

9. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein:

the reply message created by the recipient includes voice content and no other multimedia content;

the sender device is Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)-enabled; and

delivering the reply message to the sender comprises:

transcoding the voice content of the reply message to an audio format associated with MMS to create an MMS message; and

initiating transmission of the MMS message to the sender device.

10. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the reply message is obtained upon creation of the reply message by the recipient using the IVR system.

11. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the reply message is created without the recipient device being compatible with any dedicated protocol that can natively support direct voice messaging.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the message from the sender device is performed upon the establishment of a network connection with the sender device, wherein the message has been previously created and stored at the sender device at a time when no network connection with the sender device exists.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein timing of the initiation of transmission of the SMS notification is determined based on a priority value assigned to the instant voice message.

14. (Currently Amended) In a wireless communication system, a method of enabling a recipient of an instant voice message to send a reply message, comprising:

receiving an instant voice message for a recipient from a wireless station of a sender without the sender placing a call to the recipient, the instant voice message received at a messaging service associated with the wireless station of the sender, the messaging service including a first interactive voice response (IVR) system;

notifying the recipient with a first Short Message service (SMS) notification that the messaging service of the sender has the instant voice message for the recipient, the first SMS notification enabling the recipient to access the IVR system to obtain the instant voice message;

in the first ~~a first~~ interactive voice response (IVR) system from which the recipient has obtained the instant voice message, recording a reply message that is created by the recipient and is to be delivered to the sender of the instant voice message;

storing the instant voice message in a second IVR system;

initiating transmission of a second SMS ~~Short Message Service (SMS)~~ notification to a wireless station of the sender, the second SMS notification including information permitting the wireless station of the sender to access the second IVR system; and

in response to the second IVR system receiving a request for the stored instant voice message from the sender, transmitting the stored instant voice message from the IVR system to the wireless station of the sender.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the first IVR system and the second IVR system are the same IVR system.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the first IVR system and the second IVR system are different IVR systems.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the reply message is created without a wireless device of the recipient being compatible with any dedicated protocol that can natively support direct voice messaging.

18. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein:

the sender is a subscriber to an instant messaging service by which the instant voice message is created; and

the recipient is not a subscriber to any instant messaging service, but is permitted by the first IVR system to create the reply message to the instant voice message.

19. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the recipient is associated with a wireless operator different from a wireless operator associated with the sender.

20. (Original) The method of claim 14, comprising, prior to recording the reply message:

receiving the instant voice message from the wireless station of the sender;

storing the instant voice message in the first IVR system;

initiating transmission of an SMS notification to the wireless station of the recipient, the SMS notification including information permitting the wireless station of the recipient to access the first IVR system; and

in response to the first IVR system receiving a request for the stored instant voice message, transmitting the stored instant voice message from the first IVR system to the wireless station of the recipient.

21. (Currently Amended) In a wireless communication system, a method of enabling a recipient having a recipient wireless station that is not Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)-enabled to receive voice content from an MMS message and to respond thereto, comprising:

sending ~~the~~ a voice content of an MMS message to ~~the~~ a recipient without placing a call to the recipient, including:

receiving the MMS message from a sender device, the message including voice content and other multimedia content;

extracting the voice content from the MMS message;

storing the voice content in a first interactive voice response (IVR) system from which the recipient accesses the voice content; and

initiating transmission of a Short Message Service (SMS) notification to the recipient wireless station, the SMS notification including information permitting the recipient wireless station to access the voice content from the first IVR system; and

sending a reply from the recipient to the sender of the MMS message without placing a call to the sender, including:

in the IVR system, recording a reply message that is created by the recipient and is to be delivered to the sender;

transcoding the voice content of the reply message to an MMS format to create an MMS reply message; and

initiating transmission of the MMS reply message to the sender device.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein extracting the voice content from the MMS message is performed in response to a determination that the recipient wireless station is not MMS-enabled.

23. (Currently Amended) In a recipient wireless station that operates in a wireless network, a method of replying to an instant voice message, comprising:

receiving a Short Message Service (SMS) notification that includes instructions for accessing an instant voice message stored in an interactive voice response (IVR) system, the IVR system associated with a sender of the instant voice message, wherein a sender delivered the instant voice message to the IVR system without placing a call to the recipient wireless station;

in response to the performance of the instructions, accessing the IVR system; and

transmitting voice data to the IVR system without placing a call to a sender of the instant voice message, the IVR system recording the voice data to create a reply message to the instant voice message, the reply message being sent to the sender of the instant voice message.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein the reply message is sent to the sender by:

storing the reply message in an the IVR system; and

transmitting, to a wireless station of the sender, an SMS notification including information permitting the wireless station of the sender to access the IVR system in which the reply message is stored; and

in response to the IVR system receiving a request for the stored reply message, transmitting the stored reply message to the wireless station of the sender.

25. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein:

the reply message created by the IVR system includes voice content and no other multimedia content;

the wireless station of the sender is Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS)-enabled; and

the reply message is sent to the sender by:

transcoding the voice content of the reply message to an audio format associated with MMS to create an MMS reply message; and

initiating transmission of the MMS reply message to the wireless station of the sender.

26. (Currently Amended) In a wireless station associated with a wireless communication system, a method for initiating transmission of an instant voice message, comprising:

at a time when no network connection between the wireless station and the wireless communication system exists, receiving user input including:

voice data; and

information specifying a recipient;

storing an instant voice message that includes the voice data locally at the wireless station; and

when a subsequent network connection between the wireless station and the wireless communication system exists, initiating transmission of the instant voice message from the wireless station to the wireless communication system without attempting to establish a live telephone call between the wireless station and the recipient, such that the instant voice message is sent to the recipient, wherein a message server provides the recipient with instructions on how to retrieve the instant voice message from an interactive voice response system.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the instant voice message is stored locally in response to a determination that is made automatically by the wireless station that no network connection exists.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the instant voice message is stored locally further in response to user input indicating that the instant voice message is complete and is to be sent, resulting in the automatic determination that no network connection exists.

30. (Original) The method of claim 26, further comprising automatically determining, by the wireless station, that the subsequent network connection exists, such that transmission of the instant voice message is initiated without further user input.

31. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein initiating transmission of the instant voice message comprises initiating transmission of the instant voice message to an interactive voice response (IVR) system, wherein the recipient is notified of the instant voice message at the IVR system.

32. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the recipient is notified upon receiving a Short Message Service (SMS) notification at a recipient wireless station, the SMS notification including information permitting the recipient wireless station to access the IVR system.

33. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein initiating transmission of the instant voice message comprises initiating transmission of the instant voice message to a recipient wireless station of the recipient, the recipient wireless station being adapted to directly receive instant voice messages from the wireless communication system without requiring the recipient to access an interactive voice response (IVR) system.

34. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the instant voice message includes the voice data and other multimedia content, wherein the wireless communication system, upon receiving the instant voice message:

extracts the voice data from the instant voice message;

stores the voice content in an interactive voice response (IVR) system;

initiates transmission of a Short Message Service (SMS) notification to a recipient wireless station of the recipient, the SMS notification including information permitting the recipient wireless station to access the IVR system; and

in response to the IVR system receiving a request for the stored voice data, transmits the stored voice data from the IVR system to the recipient wireless station.

35. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein timing of the initiation of transmission of the instant voice message from the wireless station to the wireless communication system is determined based on a priority value assigned to the instant voice message.